

flock of Avocets from the cars. They were amongst other Waders in a slough adjoining the ocean. Again, whilst lying behind cover in the valley awaiting Ducks, I noted a solitary individual, but could not get a shot. The same day a companion with me killed two from a flock of about twenty Ibises. A few days previous a market hunter in the town brought me one, and later two individuals of the same bird. He told me that with the exception of one killed in the same vicinity (Mission Valley) last year, they were the first he had met with or heard of in several years' hunting. The Avocet he had never seen, although I know of an authentic capture of seven on the Bay shores a few years since. Both birds are of sufficient rarity here to warrant notice of their unusual presence this year, and the size of the flock of Ibises seen in the Santa Margarita is especially unusual, as previous records have only been of, at most, six or seven individuals.—GODFREY HOLTERHOFF, JR., *San Diego, Cal.*

The Eggs of the Knot (*Tringa canutus*) found at last!—No fact is more generally recognized among ornithologists than the different degrees of distinction, so to speak, attaching to the discovery of the eggs of different birds. The nests of some species have been found early, or by accident; others before their absence from collections has excited much notice; while others still have long been the object of special and diligent search, and the failure to find them has been commented upon by many distinguished writers. Of this latter category no more marked example can be found than the Knot (*Tringa canutus* L.). Seebohm, in his entertaining 'Siberia in Europe,' tells us that when he and Harvie-Brown started for the Petchora, the birds "to the discovery of whose eggs special interest seemed to attach, were the Grey Plover, the Little Stint, the Sanderling, the Curlew Sandpiper, the Knot, and Bewick's Swan."* And in a foot note he adds: "The Knot (*Tringa canutus*, Linn.) was the only one of these six species of birds which we did not meet with in the valley of the Petchora. It probably breeds on the shores of the Polar basin in both hemispheres. but its eggs are absolutely unknown."

Major Henry W. Feilden, naturalist to the Nares Arctic Expedition of 1875-76, says: "I was not so fortunate as to obtain the eggs of the Knot during our stay in the Polar regions, though it breeds in some numbers along the shores of Smith Sound and the north coast of Grinnell Land. . . . During the month of July my companions and I often endeavored to discover the nest of this bird; but none of us were successful. However, on July 30, 1876, the day before we broke out of our winter-quarters, where we had been frozen in eleven months, three of our seamen, walking by the border of a small lake, not far from the ship, came upon an old bird accompanied by three nestlings, which they brought to me."† These young I have seen in the British Museum at South Kensington,

* Siberia in Europe. By Henry Seebohm, London, 1880, p. 2.

† Narrative of a voyage to the Polar Sea. By Capt. Sir G. S. Nares, London, Vol. II, 1878, pp. 211-212.

where, in company with a pair of the old birds, they constitute one of the most attractive of the many 'natural groups' which adorn Mr. Sharpe's department.

Lieut. A. W. Greely, U. S. A., Commander of the late Expedition to Lady Franklin Sound, succeeded in obtaining the long-sought-for egg of this species; and has had the extreme kindness to ask me to publish the first account of it.

Lieut. Greely writes me: "The specimen of bird and egg were obtained in the vicinity of Fort Conger, latitude 81° 44' N. The egg was 1.10 inch [28 mm.] in the longer axis, and 1 inch [25.40 mm.] in the shorter. Color, light pea green, closely spotted with brown in small specks about the size of a pin-head."—C. HART MERRIAM, *Locust Grove, N. Y.*

Southern Range of *Rissa tridactyla kotzbuwei*.—In the last number of 'The Auk' (Vol. II, p. 222), Mr. N. S. Goss mentions the capture of *Rissa tridactyla kotzbuwei* in Washington Territory, and thinks it to be its most southern record. We have, however, received it from Mr. Charles A. Allen, taken at Nicasio, Cal.—SOUTHWICK & JENCKS, *Providence, R. I.*

The Relationship of *Podiceps occidentalis* and *P. clarkii*.—About four years ago Mr. Henshaw* discussed the relationship of *Podiceps occidentalis* and *P. clarkii*, as shown by a series of eleven skins collected by me in San Francisco Bay, Cal. Owing to lack of specimens from different localities, and from the breeding grounds of these forms, I am unable to give a definite opinion respecting the conclusion arrived at by Mr. Henshaw, but will leave the now generally accepted belief of the specific identity of the two forms until they can be studied from fresh specimens on the breeding grounds. From my own investigations I decidedly incline to the opinion that the differences which, prior to Mr. Henshaw's investigations, were supposed to characterize different species or varieties, are in reality only sexual.

Of the twenty skins of this bird which I have prepared fifteen are females, and can easily be distinguished from the males, the female differing from the male in size and in the general appearance of the bill. In fact, I find no difficulty in distinguishing the sexes in the fresh bird before skinning. The color and curvature of the bill as seen in skins are of little aid, as the bill so warps in drying that a bill slightly recurved in life may become very much recurved in the dried skin. The color of the bill, also, soon changes after death, especially if the bird be suspended by the legs for a time before skinning. Through the courtesy of the authorities of the National Museum I was kindly afforded an opportunity to examine twenty-five specimens of these Grebes in the collection of the Museum, and with one exception I correctly determined the sex at sight by the

* On *Podiceps occidentalis* and *P. clarkii*. By H. W. Henshaw. Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, VI, pp. 214-216.